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ABSTRACT

Drawing on nearly 6 years of findings by the American Council of Education's Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials, this book exposes the techniques that diploma mills (shadowy educational institutions with addresses ranging from shopping malls to post office boxes) use to lure prospective students. Explanations of how many of these businesses actually operate legally under lax state requirements are presented. Suggestions on ways to avoid these diploma mills and get rid of them altogether are provided along with names of persons convicted of crimes associated with diploma mill operations, ways to identify diploma mills in legal and illegal forms, and states in which diploma mill activity is especially rampant. Fifteen chapters focus on the following: fast-lane U: graduating magna cum fraud; a definition of the problem; characteristics of a diploma mill; by the numbers: an art, not a science; the threat to nontraditional higher education; dipscam, diploma mills and the FBI; diploma mills and fraudulent occupational licensure: findings of the U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Aging; when a degree is not a degree; the uses and abuses of accreditation; state laws: the baseline defense; California: a very special case; the federal government: a limited role; transcripts and assorted sundries; diplomas for export: a boom in foreign trade; and conclusions: what must be done to make things better. Four appendices are a glossary of acronyms; important addresses; bibliographic resources; and state statutes and persons responsible for oversight. (SM)

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